



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind's Veterans History Project Celebrates Five-Year Anniversary

40,000 Histories Archived; Nation's Largest Collection of Oral Histories

Washington, DC –Marking the five-year anniversary of the Veterans History Project (VHP), U.S. Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), the project's "founding father," recognized the tens of thousands of veterans and volunteers who have contributed to build what is nation's largest collection of oral histories. The Veterans History Project of the American Folklife Center is a nationwide volunteer effort to collect and preserve oral histories from America's war veterans and their supporters on the home-front. The collection is housed at the Library of Congress.

"The stories of our nation's veterans give us a sense of the human element of our country at war, and are critical to the preservation of American history," stated Rep. Kind. "Our veterans have once again answered the call to service, coming forward to participate in the Veterans History Project by recording stories and contributing personal documents for the project. Due to the incredible effort of our nation's veterans and the extraordinary volunteers and staff who run the VHP, the project has taken off in an exciting direction over the last five years."

The success of the VHP is due in large part to the partnerships formed with cooperating organizations willing to promote the project and to commit resources to carrying it out. Participating organizations include veterans and military groups, libraries and archives, museums, oral history programs, universities, and civic organizations. As of October 2005, 94 Senators and 202 Representatives have designated staff to work with the Veterans History Project. The combined efforts have brought in more than more than 40,000 individual submissions in the last five years.

This year, the VHP was selected as one of the "Top 50" for the 2005 Innovations in American Government Award competition. Often referred to as the "Oscar" of government prizes, this prestigious award recognizes 50 of the most creative, forward-thinking, results-driven government programs.

Diane Kresh, Director of the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress, noted the following on the project's growth, "Thanks to Representative Kind's vision and robust support from Congress overall, in less than five years, the Veterans History Project has become the largest oral history archive in the United States. This Project is important because the Veterans stories are our stories."

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This Veterans Day, the VHP will publish a new book, entitled "Forever a Soldier," that is the second in a series of collected oral histories from the growing collection of the Library of Congress Veterans History Project. It joins "Voices of War: Stories of Service from the Home Front and Front Lines," published last November. These unforgettable eyewitness accounts of wartime service from veterans of World War I through the current conflict in Iraq are culled from letters, diaries, private memoirs and oral histories collected by the VHP.

"The Veterans History Project is a salute and an ongoing memorial to the brave men and women who have sacrificed to protect the ideals of this nation and those who continue that proud tradition of service today," stated Kind. "With Veterans Day approaching, now is the perfect time to raise awareness about the program and how to get involved. On this Veterans Day, I urge people to participate in this nationwide, volunteer effort to collect and preserve veterans' stories."

Those interested in becoming involved in the VHP are encouraged to send an e-mail to vohp@loc.gov or call the toll-free message line at (888) 371-5848 to request a project kit. The kit is also available on the VHP Web site at www.loc.gov/vets. A companion Web site to the book with selected stories is also available through the VHP Web site.